

Granite removal is bone of contention

By Alan Edwards
Deseret News staff writer

The LDS Church wants to go back to the future in Little Cottonwood Canyon, but some residents want to keep it firmly in the present.

Representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints have petitioned Salt Lake County for a conditional-use permit to remove granite boulders from an area it owns about 1½ miles up the canyon, on the north side. It is the same site where granite was extracted to build the Salt Lake temple more than 100 years ago.

The site has been used occasionally since then, most recently in 1991 for granite to repair the Salt Lake Temple. The church says it now needs between 11,000 and 12,000 tons of granite to install a 3-centimeter facade on its large new assembly hall, now being built on the block north of Temple Square.

"There's a very strong desire to link the new assembly building with Temple Square" in appearance, said project manager Tom Hanson.

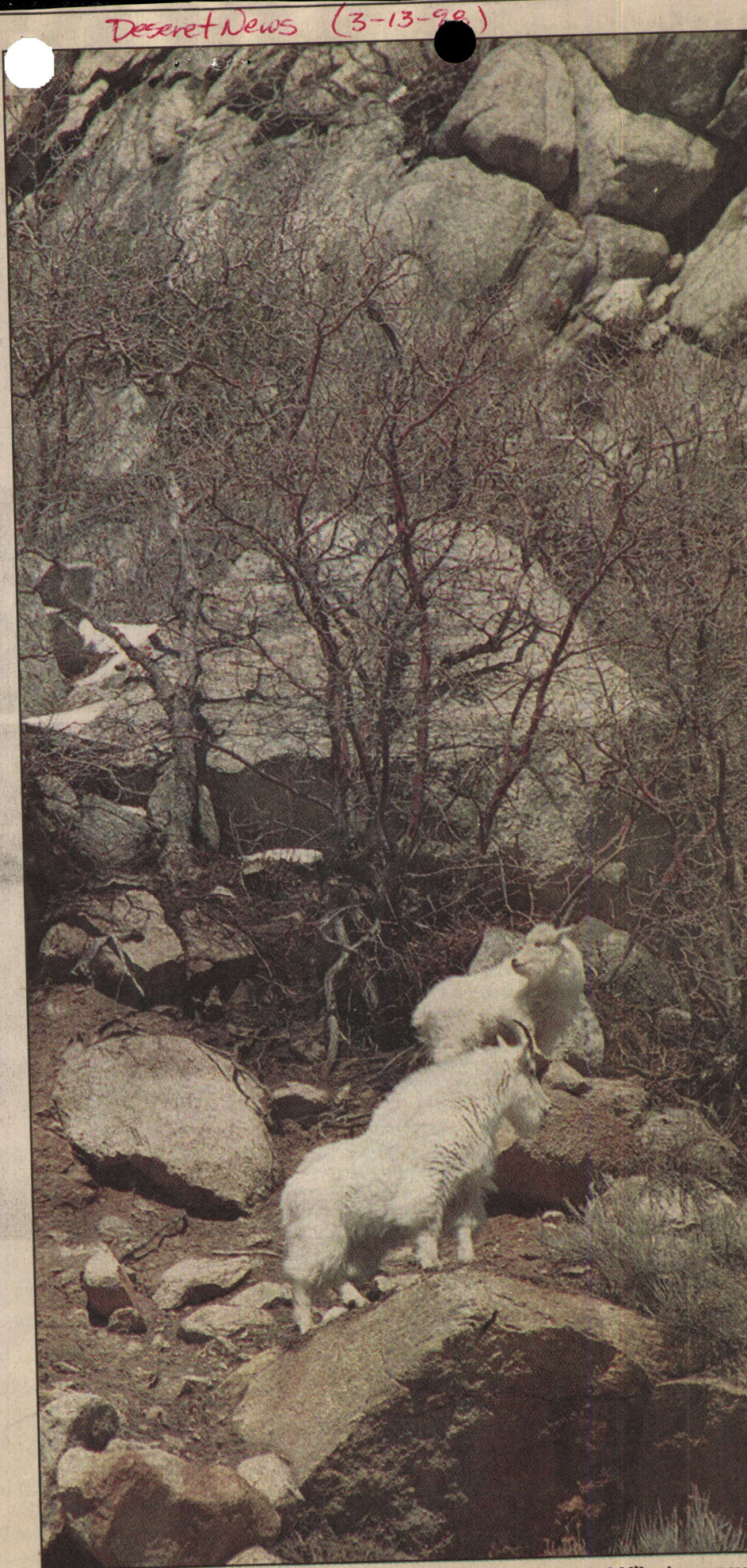
Hanson acknowledged that similar-looking granite could be found at other sites. But, he said, in addition to the visual impact, a feeling of stability and tradition is part of the decision. The church would like people to know the granite for both the temple and the new assembly hall was taken from the same site.

The location has entered local folklore as a place of sweat and strain where pioneers heroically slaved away through a 40-year period to build the most well-known physical landmark of the LDS Church.

But nearby residents say those reasons to remove the granite are outweighed by the environmental impacts of the project.

"It's the most pristine canyon in the state and shouldn't be dealt with in this way," said Karen Cunningham, who is one of five homeowners who live about 1,000 feet below the site. "This is not a small project. This is large scale."

They say the canyon would never be the same after the project, negatively affecting it for wildlife, hik-



Mountain goats roam near the site where the LDS Church would like to remove boulders for use on the new assembly hall being built across from Temple Square.

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put the drugs there.

Illsley said it appears the drugs
might have been there for as long
as two years. Police are also work-
ing with the owners of the Bounti-
ful store where Graham purchased
the cassette to trace the origins of
the unit.

The discovery is like something
right out of a television police
drama, Graham said.

"It's kind of crazy, but when you
get thinking about it, I bet there's a
lot of this around. People need a
sneaky way to get this stuff
around," he said. "This was pretty
sneaky."

RiverPark project for 120 days.

SOS has appealed the council's
decision to the Utah Supreme
Court, arguing referendums are le-
gitimate in some cases where a re-
zoning can "drastically affect the
character of a community."

That appeal is pending and no
court date has been set.

But SOS organizers are expected
to file a similar appeal if council
members reject the initiative peti-
tion the same way they did the ref-
erendum request.

A vote on petition application
has been scheduled for the coun-
cil's Mar. 17 meeting.

SOS spokeswoman Janalee To-
bias said last week her group wants
city officials to adopt an ordinance
allowing the property to revert
back to its original zonings that
provided for open space, agricul-
tural and recreational uses.

But developer Bruce Anderson
contends such an action would
amount to a condemnation.

Such a "taking of property," he
said Tuesday, would mean the city
would have to pay the current
value of his land plus millions of
dollars spent in developing the
property over the past 18 months.

Anderson said the city, even by
conservative estimates, would
have to come up with at least \$12.5
million in compensation — an
amount he contends would impose
a huge property tax increase on
South Jordan residents.

Kerry Nielsen, project architect
for the new assembly hall, ex-
plains plans for stone removal.

ROCKS

Continued from B1

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have changed. These are their con-
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Services Director J.D. Johnson. It
does not allow for extraction from
the mountain itself.

Nevertheless, activists maintain
that even boulder removal would
contribute to destabilization.

- Scarring of the mountain. The
church plans a 600-foot-long road
from the highway, two staging ar-
eas and two other 50- to 60-foot-
long roads. Under the conditions
of the permit, it would be required
to rehabilitate and revegetate the
area after completion.

- Dust and noise. Church

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Should the permit be granted,
removal would take place from
April to December, church offi-
cials say. Nevertheless, the per-
mit's validity would continue int
perpetuity.

AIRPORT

Continued from B1

The new year is off to a slow
start as well. Passenger volume for
January was down 7.4 percent
compared with last year.

"We review our plan all the
time, but right now we are continu-
ing" with the expansion project,
Widmar said.

A one-year lapse in the break-
neck pace of passenger growth is
actually a welcomed change, not a
concern, he said.

The major face lift is needed be-
cause the airport has outgrown its
current facilities. A slowdown in
passenger-volume increases would
ease the congestion and traffic-
management problems airport of-
ficials expect to endure at least
until the first eight years of the

comparison with recent years. The
airport's passenger volume grew
14.2 percent in 1995 and increased
at a double-digit percentage in
nine of the 16 years.

Airline officials agree with
Widmar that rising airfares, bol-
stered by a healthy national and
cal economy, have contributed to
the slight decrease in passengers.
There is a cease-fire in the air
wars, with fewer bargains and sp
cial rates being offered.

But most people, particularly
business travelers, are still book-
ing flights, with the economy so
strong, they can afford to do so.
And airlines, despite a drop in pa-
ssengers, are making more money.

"Most airlines increased their
ticket prices (in 1997) and we jus
went along," said Bill Gibbs, Salt
Lake director of Delta Air Lines.
"That always tends to make pas-



Kerry Nielsen, project architect for the new assembly hall, explains plans for stone removal.



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